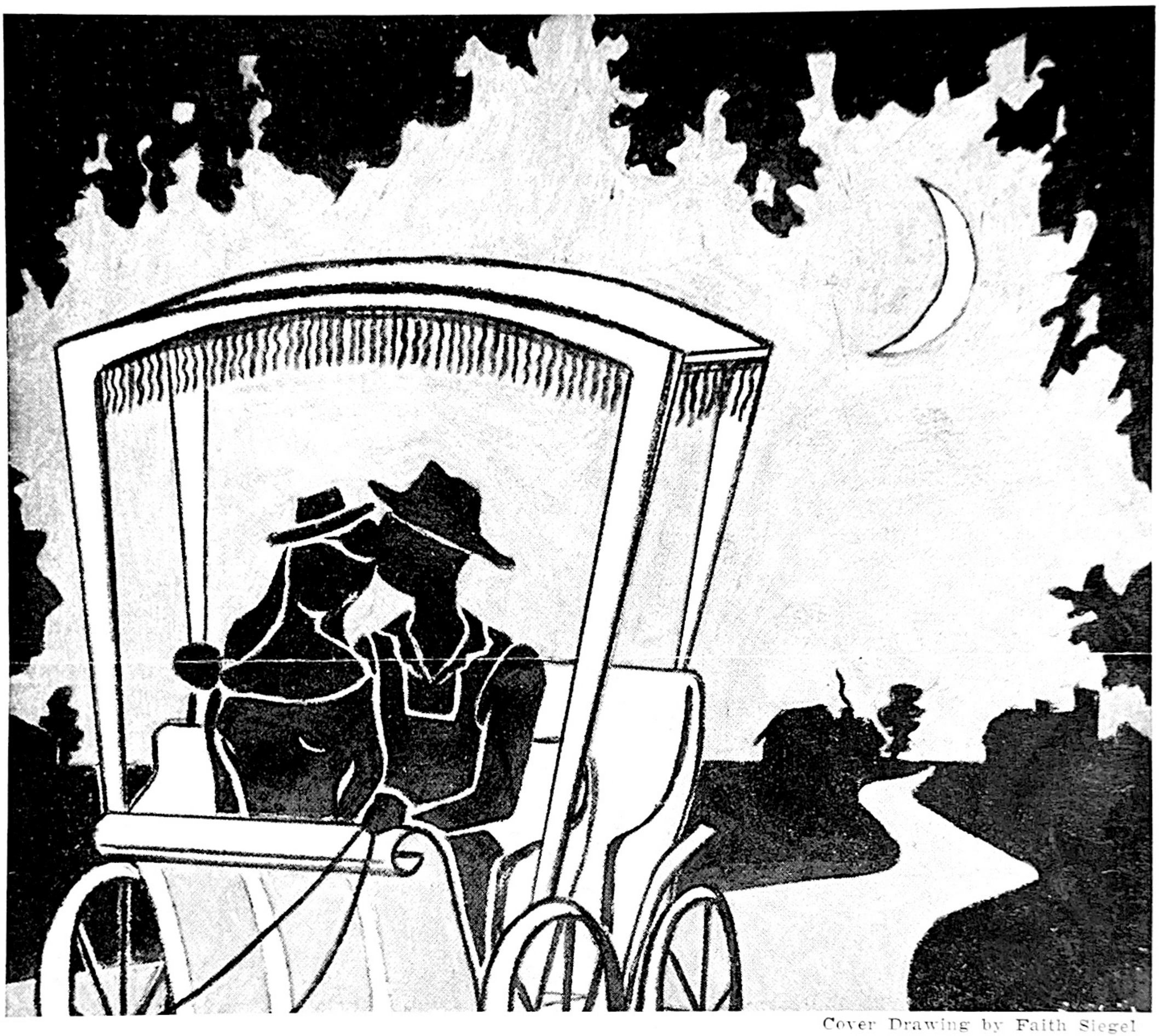
The Shakerite

27th Year, No. 11 — Shaker Heights High School, Shaker Heights, Ohio — May 10, 1957

Performances Friday and Saturday at 8:30 P. M. in the Auditorium



Cover Drawing by Faith Siegel

OKLAHOMA!

with

Linda Kahn **Robert Lansell** **Sally Gould** **Kip Cohen**

Directed by Reynold Ellis Staged by Kelly Danford

Technical Direction by Kenneth Caldwell

Book by Oscar Hammerstein III Music by Richard Rodgers

Choreography by David Smukler

Who's Who . . . Kahn, Lansell Share Lead

After the results of the tryouts for the roles in "Oklahoma!" were announced, it might easily have been said that Linda Kahn was the most astonished and happy girl to be found anywhere in Shaker.

Linda, who is a second alto, had tried out for the part of Ado Annie Carnes, since the player needed to play Laurey is usually a soprano. However, it would have been easy to knock this little senior over with a sheet of music when she was told that she would play Laurey in the annual A Cappella Choir presentation.

Linda has had a great deal of experience in choir work due to her years in the Shaker Junior High Choir and her three years in our own group. In 1955, as a sophomore, she won a part in the Choir production of "Annie Get Your Gun."

Even with these excellent qualifications, Linda admits that in the beginning it was difficult to develop her character on the stage; but, with time she found it easier and easier to play Laurey, whom she describes as an "All-American Girl" type.

Despite all her usual load of choir and school work, Linda still finds time to serve as president of the French Club and to participate in the Chanticleers.

Quite another story is told when Bob Lansell, who portrays Curley, is our subject. Bob, having had no previous dramatic experience and less than two years of choir membership, is now playing the male lead in "Oklahoma!" and enjoying every moment of it.

A member of the Chanticleers, too, Bob is playing his first part on the stage, and much to his surprise, he finds it rather easy to memorize his lines. The real obstacle, in his opinion, lies in the musical portion of the play. Curley is a baritone, he explains, but the player must have a wide singing range in order to do justice to all the songs.

This talented junior, who is also a section leader in the Choir, believes that all the professionals who have played the character have done fine jobs. His favorite is Gordon MacRae.

The only leading player who has ambitions of becoming a professional player is Sally Gould, the vivacious junior who takes the part of Ado Annie Carnes. She says that during the anxious waiting period after tryouts her hopes ebbed; but she was elated when the good news reached her.

Sally, a first soprano, plans to travel to New York for study and stage experience after graduation from college. Although she has never done any acting before this, she finds the new experience quite enjoyable.

She really enjoys rehearsals despite all the work they entail. Of all the scenes in the play Sally says she likes the "All Er Nothin'" sequence best. In all fairness she describes Annie as "dumb" but "likable" and she finds the part easy to develop.

Even in the face of the extra time consumed in preparation for the show, Sally manages to find time to remain active in several clubs, including the Art Service organization.

The last member of the trio of juniors playing leads is Kip Cohen, who joined the Choir just this year. Kip, who transferred from Heights High in his sophomore year, plays cowhand Will Parker.

Besides playing a lead role, Kip qualifies as the busiest member of the cast, since he doubles as Publicity Chairman of the Choir also. It is his job to advertise the show and pep up public interest. In this respect he has succeeded admirably.

In Kip's estimation, Will is something of a "local yokel," but he finds the character fun to play. The "Oklahoma Hello" scene wins the nomination as his favorite part of the play.

Another musical affiliation of his is the Chanticleers; but with all this experience he has no wish to become a professional actor or singer.

Although Will is a tenor part and Kip is a baritone, he professes no difficulty in reaching the range of notes necessary.

He believes that even though "Oklahoma!" is probably the most difficult production the choir could have undertaken, it is also the finest from the standpoint of music, dialogue and story.

Danford, Ellis Produce Show

In both high school and college Mr. Ellis sang tenor leads in musical productions. Now, with much added experience, he is displaying his musical talent in the capacity of musical director of "Oklahoma!"

Along with his musical work at Shaker, Mr. Ellis is also director of both the Tapco choir and his church choir. The Tapco choir is a recreational chorus that sings mainly show tunes and popular music. This is more evidence that he has worked with a wide variety of music and is a man of great versatility.

Mr. Ellis has very much enjoyed working with the choir this year. He states that the co-operation of the Choir, especially the leads in the production, is unbelievable and certainly praiseworthy.

Education is a continuous factor in the life of Mr. Danford, dramatic director of "Oklahoma!" He received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts degrees at Ohio Wesleyan University, and is currently working on his Ph. D. in Theater at Ohio State University.

Mr. Danford's talents shine in several fields. As an actor and director he has been associated with many theater groups in various parts of the country. He has played in over a hundred roles including many in plays of Shakespeare and operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. "Oklahoma!" is another achievement added to the more than fifty productions of opera and drama Mr. Danford has directed. He is also co-author of two Children's Theater plays.

These pictures, taken during one of the many rehearsals, show the "Oklahoma!" cast combining fun and laughs with their hard work. These photographs indicate that the expression "practice makes perfect" is true.

Publicity-Ticket Drive for 'Oklahoma!' a Huge Success

A special publicity committee has carried on an intensive campaign to sell as many tickets as possible for the A Cappella Choir's production of "Oklahoma!"

Composed of more than fifty people in and out of the Choir, and under the leadership of Kip Cohen, the committee has used practically every conceivable medium in its effort to place the show before the public.

Printed posters were placed in stores throughout the three main shopping centers of Shaker Heights and many painted posters were distributed through the schools. Art classes made the eyecatching mobiles which can be found hanging in the High School, and Mr. Jeffery fashioned the huge and intricate one in the main hall.

Tunes from the show have been sung every other day over the P.A. system and on several occasions in the main hall. Dick Doering played more songs on records and made announcements each morning in the main hall.

Members of the cast appeared on radio and TV, and special material written by members of the publicity committee was used by several stations. A fine spread of pictures and a story appeared in the Plain Dealer's Sunday Pictorial section, and other stories and pictures ran in the Sun-Press, News and Press.

The attendance for any performance is determined by the number of tickets sold. Anxious to have a full house, the choir members acted as salesmen and were helped out by the publicity committee who sold tickets during the lunch period.

As a result of this concerted effort, tickets for both performances sold like hotcakes in the "Oklahoma" ticket office, and many more have been sold by each Choir member.

Shaker's Stage Is Right Off Broadway

What Broadway shows have you seen? Attending Shaker's dramatic productions is a way of adding many to your list. Shaker's drama groups take pride in presenting shows which have theatrical and literary merit. Unlike most schools, those they present have had long runs on Broadway. Many were popular enough to have had movies made of them.

On the list of past presentations at Shaker are *Arsenic and Old Lace* by Joseph Kesselring, *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, *I Remember Mama* by John Van Druten, *Harvey* by Mary Chase, *Girl Crazy* by Ira Gershwin, and *Annie Get Your Gun* by Irving Berlin.

On the agenda for next year is *The Hasty Heart* by John Patrick who wrote *Teahouse of the August Moon*. It is a comedy-drama being presented by a high school for the first time in this section of the country.

Crews Are Active Behind the Scenes

While the audience thrills to the smooth performance of the players in "Oklahoma!" the success of the presentation depends in a great measure upon the equally smooth performance that goes on behind the scenes by the backstage crews.

Judy S. Stark, the stage manager, directs the show with the aid of the associate stage managers, Bruce Berger, Robert Dale, Shelly Feren, and Carole Goldman. In charge of the stage and lights are Bill Blanca and John Ross.

Toni Neumark, head of the props crew, had to beg, borrow, or make the required furniture and hand props for "Oklahoma!" Richmond Shreve is in charge of the sound effects.

Kip Cohen heads the publicity committee and David Meil is responsible for the tickets. Eileen Gaines heads the make-up crew, while Barbara Sacks and her costume crew had the difficult task of finding all the cowboy outfits and other necessary costumes.

It Seams That Busy Sewers Kept the Cast in Stitches

"On with the show!" But how can the show go on without the costumes? Laurey and Curly can't sing "Surrey With the Fringe on Top" while wearing clothes of the 1957 era if the show "Oklahoma!" is going to be realistic. To avoid this pitfall, Judy Perkoff and Barbara Sacks took charge of the costume committee, one of the most important organizations behind the show.

Their committee of busy sewers included Bonnie Lang, Sunny Moss, Fern Press, Elna Green and Christy Klein. This hard-working crew even gave up most of their spring vacation for the play. They altered some costumes and made some new ones, including Laurey's time-consuming wedding dress. Many of the girls are making their own costumes. Even the boys have pitched in and cooperated by putting fringe on their pants.

The sewing work went on in room 128 which had been converted into a cloakroom.

No doubt you will recognize the cowboy hats worn by the cast as belonging to Shaker boys, and you will see all the props and other weird objects which had been requested over the P. A.